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acknowledged a sense of their kindness, and also to Dr. Disney, who had readily and handsomely offered to perform all the duty that he was unable to discharge himself, but he chose rather to make his retreat while he was in the full possession of his faculties, to meet, as he expresses it, "the unavoidable infirmities of nature, in a private station; and if I may not be wholly useless therein, it will complete the innumerable blessings with which my life has been crowned, of which the greatest of all is a capacity and opportunity of being serviceable to others, in promoting the cause of truth and virtue."

The life of this excellent man could not be useless; till he had attained his eightieth year, he did not cease to instruct by his pen, though he had chosen to retire from the pulpit. In the year 1802 he published his last work, entitled, "Conversations on the Divine Government, showing that every thing is from God, and for good to all." The object of this work was, as the title imports, to vindicate his maker from those gloomy notions which are too often attached to his providence, and to show that the government of this world is the wisest that could have been adopted, and that the evils and distresses of life are not permitted, but for the good of all. It must be acknowledged that a work of a better tendency could not have been left as the last legacy of a Christian minister.

He could not foresee whether the cruel laws, still existing on our statute book, should not hurl their vengeance against the first man that opened a place of worship avowedly in opposition to the doctrines which those laws were intended to guard and uphold. But he had counted the costs, and was, as we have seen from his own letters, prepared for any, and every event, however trying, however afflicting. He ever acted upon the principles which his last publication justifies and defends, that the dispensations of Heaven are always right, and that suffering and pain cannot be inflicted but for the wisest purposes; hence having seen his duty he could not diverge from its path. By this principle he was actuated to the latest period of life;

being on his death-bed, and in great pain, which he mentioned with perfect meekness and patience, a friend standing by him observed, your favourite maxim, sir, "whatever is, is right," will no doubt support you. "No," said the dying saint, with an animation that lighted up his countenance, "whatever is, is **BEST.**" This was the last sentence he was able distinctly to articulate, which proved that his faculties were still clear and vigorous, and his trust in God was unabated; and that what he had preached to others, through a long life, was able to support, to comfort, and to exhilarate the preacher himself, at the last trying moment of death, which happened November the 3d. 1808.

The remains of this excellent man were interred in Bunhill-fields, on Friday the 11th, according to his own express directions, in the most private manner possible. Had it been permitted, multitudes would gladly have shown him their last tribute of respect, by attending the funeral.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JOHN OPIE, A.R.

GREAT talents, it has been said, are generally accompanied by great eccentricities. The observation is often founded on truth. To attain to excellence, it is necessary to deviate from the beaten track; the mind once justified in the deviation to which it has been urged by its superior powers, begins to hold the multitude in contempt, and to imagine that as they have been wrong in one point they must be wrong in all, and thus is guided by a prejudice which, though directly contrary to that by which they are actuated, is equally unfounded in reason. The one is impelled by a habit, that long custom has made almost instinctive, to follow the same course in which his fore-fathers have gone: the other, once broken from these shackles, feeling averse to come again within the sphere of the attraction that regulates the movements of the great mass of mankind, uses all his efforts to increase his distance, until habit forces him to continue in the same path of deviation and to vary still more and more from the **bbb**

popular direction. Thus though each moves in a different course, both are governed by the same law. The one is the motion of a body propelled by single force, and unaffected by any secondary impulse which causes a change in its direction. It is motion in a right line. The other is that of a body originally excited to action by the same cause as the former, but afterwards acted upon by another, which though it does not cause it to fly off immediately in an opposite direction, incessantly turns it more and more from the line of the first impulse. It is motion in a curve, always subject to the same law, yet always deviating from the original direction.

These eccentricities which at first were the mark for censure and the butt of ridicule, become when united to great talents the objects of admiration; and as the uncommon must always be the leading part of a character, we are apt to attach an idea of latent talent to apparent eccentricity, and hence to draw a conclusion the converse of the former, but altogether unfounded in reason or confirmed by experience, that great eccentricities are always accompanied by great talents. This delusive train of reasoning has led to fatal errors. It has induced many through a pervert ambition to aspire at an undeserved claim to superiority above their fellows, by braving the public opinion, and audaciously trampling upon all that society holds worthy of reverence and imitation. To counteract the pernicious tendency of such a system of opinion, more dangerous because it is never confined to theory, it may not be useless to show, not merely from abstract reasoning, but from fact and experience, that excellence in any mental endowment is so far from being incompatible with the general duties and observances of civil life, and the regular course of action necessary for the maintenance of good order in society, that a strict and steady adherence to the rules of conduct laid down by mankind in general, is the surest auxiliary that great abilities can have recourse to in order to attain the excellence to which they aspire. The following life of a painter who rose

by his own assiduity and unremitting perseverance to the highest rank in his profession is a strong illustration of this; such an example is the more necessary, because unfortunately there are but too many of an opposite kind. We have too many melancholy instances of persons of shining abilities in that profession, whose lives have tended to confirm this dangerous sophism, and have thereby become pernicious examples to the rising class, and obscured their own characters with a stain, which all the splendour of their acknowledged endowments cannot efface.

John Opie was the son of a respectable master carpenter, who resided in the neighbourhood of Truro, in Cornwall. In his younger days he enjoyed no advantages of education, but what could be afforded by the neighbouring village school. Yet even here he was remarkable for a superiority of understanding, and strength of intellect, which soon raised him above his little competitors for rural fame. At ten years of age, it is said he could solve many difficult problems in Geometry, and two years after, we find him, so far relying on his own powers, as to act at the same time in the double capacity of pupil and teacher; in the morning receiving instructions from his former master, and in the evening imparting his own acquirements to a number of children in the village, many of whom were as much advanced beyond him in years, as they were behind in knowledge. For the latter of these occupations he was by no means unqualified, as in addition to his skill in geometry he was a good Arithmetician, and was even then particularly remarkable for writing a variety of hands, with elegance and accuracy.

His father wished to bring him up to the trade, by which he himself had been supported. But this idea the young scholar could not brook. He displayed the most determined repugnance to it, even before he was conscious of those latent talents which afterwards shone out with so much splendour. The manner in which these were first discovered to himself is somewhat singular. As one of his companions was engaged in drawing

a butterfly, Opie was observed to remark him with fixed attention; on being asked what it was that had so deeply engaged his thoughts? he answered, "I am thinking that, if I was to try, I could draw a butterfly as well as Mark Oates." He made the experiment and succeeded, and on going home, related to his family with great marks of exultation the victory he had just gained.

Soon after, his father, who was employed in the repairs of a gentleman's house at Truro, took his son along with him. It happened that the picture of a farm-yard hung up in the parlour; it immediately caught his eye: and he took every opportunity of stealing away from his work to contemplate the beauties of this piece, which, though perhaps of no great value, was to him inimitable. His father, who was of the general opinion of the inutility of these arts, which do not contribute immediately to money-making, and probably thought that a turn for such occupations was only another name for idleness, corrected him; but all was in vain, he persisted in his visits to the parlour door, until the mistress of the house, noticing his curiosity, allowed him to go in and examine the picture at leisure. On returning home, he immediately began to sketch what he had seen; and by studying the picture every day, and committing the result every evening to paper, he at length, by dint of application and strength of memory, finished a tolerable copy.

In the same manner he copied several other pieces; but his father who persevered in his dislike to the growing taste of his son, had recourse to severity to check it; and it is probable that the constant exertion of parental authority would have prevailed over his perseverance, and forced him to relinquish this favourite propensity, had not his uncle, a man of sense, and a good mathematician, encouraged the boy to proceed, and to struggle against the difficulties which his father's prejudices and his own confined means opposed to his progress.

Supported by his uncle's approbation he now gave himself up entirely to his studies, particularly such as had any connexion with his favourite

art. In this he made such progress that he had ornamented his father's house with family pictures, and had also drawn portraits for many of his young companions. Still however he might have continued in this humble sphere, had not accident raised him a friend who had sagacity to discern the latent bud of genius which was checked by the untoward circumstances of his situation. Dr. Walcott, better known by the name of Peter Pindar, happened then to reside at Truro. He was so struck with the abilities and industry of the young artist, that he took him under his protection, gave him many valuable hints, and supplied him with some good prints. The effects of his valuable friendship were soon perceptible: his fame spread through the country; he was now a professed portrait painter, and earned a respectable livelihood, by taking likenesses of the most respectable families in the several towns in that neighbourhood.

In one of these expeditions he went to Padstow, equipped in a short jacket, and carrying with him all the requisite apparatus of his profession. Here he was in such repute that he was detained from home so long as to excite much uneasiness in his family; but he soon satisfied them as to the cause of his absence, when on his return he appeared before his parents in a full suit of new clothes, and made his mother a present of twenty guineas, the fruits of his honourable industry. With a true independence of spirit he declared that he would be no longer burdensome to his parents, but was determined hereafter to depend solely on his own exertions for his support.

He remained sometime in the country increasing rapidly in reputation and in skill; but at length was removed to a theatre better suited to the improvement and display of his abilities. He went to London still patronized by his first and most zealous friend Dr. Walcott, and with the resolution of raising himself if possible to the head of his profession. He was ambitious; but it was that honourable species of ambition which aspires to advancement solely by the superiority of inborn talents, and not by raising

a name on the ruins of a rival's reputation. Wherever excellence appeared, he imitated and attempted to attain to it. On the same principle also he boldly laid claim to those honours which he felt himself entitled to. When Mr. Barry was deprived of the professorship of painting at the Royal Academy, he declared himself a candidate; but on being informed that Mr. Fuseli, whose learning and talents pre-eminently entitled him to the office, was a candidate, he declined the competition; at the same time however declaring, that the person proposed was the only one in whose favour he would willingly resign his pretensions, and afterwards, on that gentleman's removal to a more profitable situation, he again advanced his claim, and was elected.

This promotion did not slacken his efforts at improvement. He made use of it not as the end to which he aimed; but as an incitement to more strenuous exertions. He studied the art of painting scientifically, and not content with storing his own mind with the fruits of former writers on this subject, he imparted to others by several publications the result of his investigations which he had thus acquired. His zeal for his own improvement made him a reader, his wish to enlighten others induced him to become an author.

His first literary essay was the *Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds* published in Walcott's edition of Pilkington's Painter's Dictionary. In this, besides the skill and knowledge of his art which might be expected from the attention that he had bestowed on it, he displayed a fluency and force of expression scarcely to be expected from a youth so little acquainted with the practice of composition.

Shortly afterwards he published a letter on the establishment of a National Gallery, to which, with the openness of character which was one of his leading characteristics he annexed his name.

The next step of his advancement in the literary world, was his appointment to deliver lectures in the Royal Institution. Whatever may have been the intrinsic merit of these, they do not appear to have contributed much

to the main object of his wishes, the increase of his reputation. Certain it is, they did not please himself, and he soon resigned his situation; but it was only to be raised to another, more suitable to his talents, and more congenial to his inclinations; the professorship of painting at the Royal Academy, which has been already mentioned. Here he delivered a course of lectures that were received with universal approbation.

His want of success in the former attempt may have contributed to this: conscious of his defects in the first instance, he laboured to correct them in the second; and he succeeded. In his former lectures he was abrupt, confused, and immethodical; rather hurrying into the subject than leading his hearers to it. In the latter he was more regular, distinct, and energetic. He shone more as professor at the Academy, than as lecturer in the Institution; because he was better fitted by nature and application to address the studious and philosophic, than the light and gay. He possessed no superficial graces: Every thing in him was manly, bold, commanding, yielding little to fashion, nothing to caprice; addressing the judgment, not captivating the fancy; ill adapted to fix the careless wanderings of the imagination, but fitted to awaken thought, and gratify reflection.

Yet, notwithstanding the many claims which this painter had on the public, it must not be concealed that he did not at once rise to that height which his abilities deserved, and his own aspiring mind aimed at. When the curiosity excited in London by the first appearance of the boy from the tip-mops of Cornwall, had subsided, he experienced that kind of neglect which is not unfrequently the consequence of high-raised expectations in the unthinking multitude. This neglect had a severe effect on him, it deprived him of employment, and what, perhaps, he felt still more strongly, by sinking him below the level which he might justly deem his right, it lessened the hope of attaining that elevation in his profession, which was the darling object of his emulation, the polar star of his exertions.

But though his exertions were check-

ed, they were not prevented: the same spirit and perseverance which had forced him at first into notice, supported him through a trial under which many possessed of less native vigour of mind would have sunk. His Endowments gradually, though slowly, again raised him into notice; the conscious sense of acknowledged merit animated his efforts; he roused himself to more powerful exertions; he increased his

renown; he prepared to seize on the crown due to his virtuous emulation, when death wrested the laurel from his brows, to place it as a lasting record of his merits on his tomb. He died on the 9th of April 1807, and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, near the tomb of Sir Joshua Reynolds. His race was short; but glorious to himself, and honourable to his country.

DETACHED ANECDOTES, &c.

ANCIENT AND MODERN ERRORS.

IF Virgilius say that the earth is not flat, but that there are inhabitants opposite to us, "Anathema esto, Let him be accursed," was the ignorant and dogmatical assertion of a Bishop of Rome some centuries ago.

Tim and Terence two brothers, lived on the road between Belfast and Lisburn, whose prospects to the north were bounded by the range of mountains in that direction. Tim had on some occasion gone to the top of one of these mountains and discovered that there was land on the other side. Full of his discovery he communicated it to Terence, who positively asserted he was in error; "for there," pointing to the mountain, "is the root of the sky." Much altercation ensued: Tim persisted; and the enraged Terence beat his brother for asserting what appeared to him incredible. Thus ignorance is always obstinate, and intolerant.

The above fact took place about twenty years ago.

The ancient Greeks confined their knowledge of the extent of the world to the confines of the Mediterranean sea, and supposed the pillars of Hercules, the modern Gibraltar, and the opposite African Promontory to form the boundaries of the earth, or according to Irish phraseology "the root of the sky." K.

JEWISH MOURNING.

The rending of the garments among the Jews, was as essential an expression of grief on the death of a relation as wearing black is with us. Levi, in his Rites and Ceremonies of the Jews, says that it was performed in the following manner; "They take a knife, and

holding the blade downwards, give the upper garment a cut on the right side, and then rend it a hand's breadth. This is done for the five following relations, *brother, sister, son, daughter, or wife*; but for *father or mother*, the rent is on the left side, and in all the garments, as coat, wai tcoat, &c.

SPANISH OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

The following is the form in which the grandees of Arragon tendered their allegiance to the new king on his coronation—"We who are as good as you, take you as our king, on condition that you guard and preserve our liberties and privileges; if not, we renounce you."

HOUSE OF STUART.

The Welsh chronicles trace the origin of the Stuart family to the following circumstance in the reign of Macbeth of Scotland. Fleance, a near relation to the good king Duncan, and said, by Shakespeare, to be the son of Banquo who had been assassinated by the Usurper, fled to Wales, where he was kindly received by Griffith prince of that country. He repaid the Welsh prince's hospitality by intriguing with his beautiful daughter, the princess Nest. The prince displeased at the lady's conduct (*especially as it was with a stranger*, says the chronicler) slays her lover, and exiles the child, who afterwards residing in Scotland, under the protection of Edgar Atheling; rises to the office of *Lord Steward*, and adopts that name for himself and his family.

SINGULAR CUSTOM.

A singular matrimonial custom prevailed of old, in many parts of Europe. Men of rank, who had lost